OAC05: Packaging HIV prevention for different populations

Pragmatically approaching social network testing: Using a peer-driven community outreach model to extend reach of HIV testing services to networks of people who inject drugs in Ukraine

Svitlana Leontyeva
Chief of Party | USAID Serving Life Project
PATH
Conflict of interest disclosure

☑ I have no Conflict of Interest to report.

☒ I have no relevant financial relationships with ineligible companies to disclose.
• HIV prevalence among PWID in Ukraine is 20.3% (IBBS 2020), up to four times higher than other key population groups.

• The USAID/PATH Serving Life project introduced and scaled a peer-driven community outreach model, leveraging social network testing (SNT) and index case testing (ICT) principles to reach people who inject drugs (PWID) and their partners through peer case-finders in 12 regions of Ukraine.

Source: 2020 Integrated Biological and Behavioral Assessment Survey
Innovative approach of involving peer case-finders among PWID

Selection of HIV case finders:

• Soon-to-be-released prisoners with a previous injecting drug use history whose imprisonment term was no longer than 3 years.

• Motivated to work in PWID communities.

• Hiring of ex-prisoners by partnering NGOs as HIV case finders/recruiters with official employment.

• Trained by NGOs on HIV outreach case finding and index testing in PWID communities.
Key features of Serving Life’s SNT approach

- Sourcing networks
- Prioritizing populations
- Peer case finders
- Self-testing services
- Prevention services
- Linkage to care
ICT using HIVST among PWID

- **Opts for HIVST**
  - PWID living with HIV (index client) is offered ICT. Index partners will be offered HIVST (assisted or unassisted).

- **HIVST delivery**
  - NGO social worker or peer case-finder delivers HIVST kit to index partners either at home or distributed at a public location.

- **HIVST result**
  - Case-finder provides assisted HIVST and interprets the result. Social worker follows up with index partner for result.

- **Escort**
  - Individuals with reactive results are accompanied to health care facilities for confirmatory diagnosis and treatment initiation.
Results: SNT among PWID (first wave)

Figure 2: HIV testing volume and positivity by quarter, October 2020 - March 2022.

Q4 2020  Q1 2021  Q2 2021  Q3 2021  Q4 2021  Q1 2022
1126     1837     2270     2802     1308     1353
14       38       33       21       33       17
1.2%     2.1%     1.5%     2.5%     1.3%     0.0%

10,696 tested for HIV
156 diagnosed HIV-positive
1.5% testing positivity
Results: ICT among PWID living with HIV (second wave)

Figure 3: HIV testing volume and positivity by quarter, October 2020—March 2022.

2,798 tested for HIV
277 diagnosed HIV-positive
10% testing positivity
**ICT service cascade among PWID**

**Figure 4: ICT cascade among PWID at community level, October 2020—March 2022.**

- **Acceptance rate**: 93%
- **Index testing rate**: 90%
- **Testing positivity**: 10%
- **Linkage to ART**: 95%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Index clients offered ICT</td>
<td>1205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of index clients who accepted ICT</td>
<td>1117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of contacts elicited</td>
<td>3125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of contacts tested</td>
<td>2798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of confirmed HIV-positive people</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of newly-diagnosed people living with HIV initiated on ART</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Linkage to care of PWID with HIV reached through SNT and ICT

Figure 5: Comparison of linkage to care between waves by quarter, October 2020—March 2022.

Social network testing

- Number of confirmed HIV-positive people
- ART initiation
- Linkage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>SNT confirmed</th>
<th>ART initiated</th>
<th>Linkage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY21Q1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>78.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY21Q2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>86.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY21Q3</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>93.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY21Q4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>119.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY22Q1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY22Q2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Index testing

- Number of confirmed HIV-positive people
- ART initiation
- Linkage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>SNT confirmed</th>
<th>ART initiated</th>
<th>Linkage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q4 2020</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1 2021</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>104.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 2021</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 2021</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>110.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4 2021</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>93.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1 2022</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Serving Life has continued to maintain delivery of essential health services for PWID in communities during war. As of June 30, 2022, the project:

**Case-finding and linkage to care:** Continued HIV case-finding and linkage to care among PWID, with 899 PWID tested for HIV, 22 newly diagnosed HIV positive, and 97% PWID living with HIV initiated on ART.

**Use of virtual platforms:** Supported partner NGOs held 237 online/phone counseling sessions on early treatment initiation, treatment adherence and retention for PWID newly diagnosed with HIV.

**Nutrition and hygiene support for personal well-being:** Provided 334 food packages and hygiene kits to PWID with HIV on ART to help them remain adherent to ART.
Conclusion and next steps

- Results highlight the promise of using a peer-driven, SNT-based outreach model to efficiently tap into networks of HIV-positive PWID and their contacts and link them to HIV services.

- Further expansion of this approach to reach PWID and their partners/contacts with HIV services is essential to achieving epidemic control in Ukraine.

Peer-driven SNT-based outreach activity within PATH-led USAID Serving Life project among people who injects drugs in Poltava. Photo: Inessa Protaschyk/Poltava NGO
Acknowledgments

• United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
• U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)
• 13 national and regional partner NGOs

Assisted self-testing to a PWID in Odesa by a peer case finder. Photo: Olena Zhevets/Odesa NGO
Thank you!